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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 L-03 NSC-05
PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 TRSE-00 /085 W
----------006809 072020Z /50
P 071545Z MAR 78
FM USMISSION USBERLIN
TO AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6378
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUESSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART

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E O 11652: NA
TAGS: ELAB WB GW
SUBJ: NATIONWIDE PRINTERS STRIKE SPREADS TO BERLIN

REF: BONN 3948

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE NATIONWIDE PRINTERS STRIKE WHICH INITIALLY BYPASSED BERLIN SPREAD TO THE CITY ON MARCH 4 EFFECTING PRIMARILY THE SPRINGER PUBLISHING COMPANY. THIS HAS LED SPRINGER TO ISSUE A STATEMENT IN BERLIN SAYING THE STRIKE IS POLITICALLY MOTIVATED, AND ACCUSING THE UNIONS OF TRYING TO FORCE CONCESSIONS FROM CERTAIN PUBLISHERS ONLY. END SUMMARY.

1. THE NATIONWIDE STRIKE OF GERMANY'S PRINTERS WHICH INITIALLY HAD NOT AFFECTED NEWSPAPER PRODUCTION IN BERLIN (EXCEPT FOR A BRIEF ONE AND HALF HOUR WARNING STRIKE AGAINST ABEND ON FEBRUARY 9) SPREAD TO
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THE CITY OVER THE WEEKEND OF MARCH 4 WHEN IG DRUCK BERLIN CALLED A 24 HOUR SYMPATHY STRIKE AGAINST THE AXEL SPRINGER PUBLISHING FIRM. AS A RESULT THE REGULAR EDITIONS OF WELT, BERLINER MORGENPOST, AND TABLOIDS BZ AND BILD WERE NOT PUBLISHED IN BERLIN ON MARCH 4, AND REDUCED NUMBERS MARCH 5. IN ADDITION SPANDAUER VOLKSBLATT AND ABEND WERE ABLE TO PUBLISH

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ONLY IN LIMITED EDITIONS MARCH 7. THE SPRINGER NEWS-
PAPERS BZ AND BILD APPEARED IN AN EIGHT PAGE CONSO-
LIDATED EMERGENCY ISSUE ON MARCH 7. PRIOR TO CALLING
THE SYMPATHY STRIKE IG DRUCK BERLIN HAD LIMIED ITS
ACTIVITIES TO THE DISTRIBUTION OF PAMPHLETS AT
VARIOUS STRATEGIC POINTS IN THE CITY TO INFORM THE
GENERAL PUBLIC ABOUT STRIKE ISSUES IN THE FRG.

2. OVER THE WEEKEND TAGESSPIEGEL, SPANDAUER VOLKS-
BLATT AND ABEND WERE NOT AFFECTED BY THE 24 HOUR STRIKE
AND APPEARED AS USUAL. WHEN ASKED WHY PRINTERS IN
BERLIN STRUCK EXCLUSIVELY AGAINST THE SPRINGER
PUBLISHING COMPANY, A UNION SPOKESMAN SAID SPRINGER HAD
BEEN THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE
EMPLOYER DECISION TO FIGHT THE PRINTERS STRIKE IN THE
FRG WITH LOCKOUTS, AND THAT THE UNION WANTED TO HIT
THE "HARD CORE" EMPLOYERS WHO USE LOCKOUTS AS
"PUNITIVE MEASURES" AGAINST THEIR EMPLOYEES.

3. ALTHOUGH NOT ALL UNION EMPLOYEES AT SPRINGER WENT
OUT WITH THE STRIKERS, SPRINGER RESPONDED BY ANNOUNCING
ON MARCH 4 THAT IT WOULD LOCK OUT ALL UNIONIZED
EMPLOYEES IN THE PRINTING AND NEWSPAPER PUBLISHING INDUSTRY
FOR 48 HOURS STARTING AT NOON MARCH 5 AND LASTING UNTIL
NOON MARCH 7.

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4. THE EDITORS OF TAGESSPIEGEL HAVE STATED IN A
SPECIAL COMMENTARY THEY OPPOSE ALL STRIKES AS WELL AS
LOCK OUTS IN BERLIN BECAUSE THE SPECIAL POLITICAL AND
ECONOMIC SITUATION OF THE CITY DOES NOT WARRANT THEM.
THEY FEEL THAT A STRIKE IN BERLIN, WHERE EVERY ENTER-
PRISE AND WORKING CITIZEN IS DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY
SUBSIDIZED BY WEST GERMAN TAXPAYERS MONEY, IS UN-
TENABLE AND IMMORAL. BESIDES, THE NEWSPAPER'S
MANAGEMENT ARGUED, STRIKES IN BERLIN ARE NOT REALLY
NECESSARY WHEN IT IS A NATIONAL ISSUE, BECAUSE RESULTS
ACHIEVED IN THE FRG BY THE STRIKE ACTION WILL AUTO-
MATICALLY BE EXTENDED TO BERLIN AS WELL. IN ADDITION,
BOTH TAGESSPIEGEL AND ABEND PUBLISHED STATEMENTS THAT
THEY WOULD NOT TAKE UNFAIR ADVANTAGE OF THEIR COMPETI-
TOR, SPRINGER, BY PRINTING ADDITIONAL COPIES OF THEIR
NEWPAPERS ON THE DAY THE SPRINGER PAPERS WERE SHUT
DOWN. SPRINGER RESPONDED TO TAGESSPIEGEL'S GESTURE
BY PUBLISHING A STATEMENT IN ITS MARCH 4 EMERGENCY

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BERLIN EDITION (DISTRIBUTED FREE OF CHARGE) CHARGING THAT "ANOTHER FACTOR MUST BE DOCUMENTED AS WELL: ON THE ALSTER, THE SPD-OWNED HAMBURGER MORGENPOST WAS NOT AFFECTED BY THE STRIKE; IN BERLIN ONLY THE NEWS-PAPERS PUBLISHED BY SPRINGER WERE AFFECTED BY THE STRIKE, WHEREAS OTHERS SUCH AS TAGESSPIEGEL AND THE COMMUNIST WAHRHEIT REMAINED UNAFFECTED. THIS POLITICAL TONE INSULTS THE EAR, BUT CAN BE EASILY INDENTIFIED."

5. THE BERLIN SPD COMMITTEE DEALING WITH EMPLOYEE PROBLEMS JOINED IN A GESTURE OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE STRIKING PRINTERS IN THE CITY OVER THE WEEKEND. THE COMMITTEE DREW ATTENTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE EMPLOYEES IN THE PRINTING INDUSTRY BY DISTRIBUTING PAMPHETS IN FRONT OF ENTERPRISES AND ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDINGS. THE SPD COMMITTEE SPOKE IN SUPPORT OF TWO IG BRUCK DEMANDS IN PARTICULAR, NAMELY, PRINTERS AT THE NEW ELECTRONIC PRINTING PLANTS MUST BE GUARANTEED
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FULL PAY PROTECTION (PRESENTLY GERMANY'S PRINTERS RE-CEIVE THE SECOND HIGHEST HOURLY WAGES IN GERMAN IN-DUSTRY) AS WELL AS THEIR POSITIONS.

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COMMENT: IT IS DIFFICULT TO TELL AT THIS TIME
WHETHER THE STRIKE LOCKOUT WILL ULTIMATELY SPREAD
TO ALL OF BERLIN'S PAPERS AS NEITHER MANAGEMENT NOR THE
UNION LEADERS HAVE COMMITTED THEMSELVES ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.
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Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
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Expiration:
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Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
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Status: NATIVE
Subject: NATIONWIDE PRINTERS STRIKE SPREADS TO BERLIN
TAGS: ELAB, WB, GE
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